

The Captain Samuel Bowman House,
220 North Main Street,
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

H.A.B.S. No.pa.241

HABS
PA
40-WILB
3-

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Pennsylvania

Historical American Buildings Survey
Thomas H. Atherton, District Officer.
139 South Main St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

The Captain Samuel Bowman House,
220 North Main Street,
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

H.A.B.S.No.Pa. 241 40-wil B

3-

The Captain Samuel Bowman House, known as Bowman Hill, as well as the section in the vicinity of the home, was built in 1810-1811, by Captain Bowman, who was born in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1753. He was one of the "Minute Men" on Lexington Commons April 17, 1775, as was his father Captain Thaddeus Bowman, who also built a home which was called Bowman Hill, at Lexington in 1649, which was destroyed by fire in 1905.

The alterations and additions, made at a later date, are said to have been copied from an old mansion in Charleston, South Carolina, where Alexander Hamilton Bowman, as a Captain in the corps of Engineers, supervised the erection of Fort Sumter, and the repairs of the fortification for the defence of the harbor of Charleston from 1838 to 1851.

It is a fine old house, low and spreading with wings extending on each side, and an air of hospitality characteristic of its Southern origin. The original cast iron steps lead to a wide veranda with fluted columns extending across the front, and was formerly heavily draped with wisteria vines. The house and piazza are painted a deep yellow, trimmed with brown. At the head of the veranda steps still stands an iron figure of a small negro boy holding a gas jet to welcome the coming, and speed the parting guest, just as he stood for over 125 years, except that his costume now is all black, whereas in Captain Bowman's time, he was in light blue.

In September 1780, Captain Samuel Bowman was an ensign in Captain J. Summer's Company of the 3rd. Massachusetts Regiment. On September 23rd. of the year, Major John Andre, the British spy was captured and sentenced to be hanged October 2, 1780. Captain Bowman, with Captain Hughes of the Maryland Line, were the special guards assigned to guard the prisoner during his last 24 hours of life, and they marched arm in arm with him to his execution.

He married Eleanor Ledlie, and they had nine children. One of them, Alexander Hamilton Bowman, the sixth child, was named after Alexander Hamilton, who was an intimate friend of his father, Captain Thaddeus Bowman. After years of honorable service in the Continental, Captain Samuel Bowman retired to Lexington, and in 1786 he moved to Wilkes-Barre, and settled on a tract of land of about four acres in extent, which was at that time a forest of oak trees, and is now a closely built section of the City, which is the County seat of Luzerne County.

For twenty four years Captain Bowman and his family lived in a small house somewhat further north of the permanent home, which he built in the years 1810 and 1811, at which home he lived until his death in 1818.

The Captain Samuel Bowman House,
220 North Main Street,
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

H.A.B.S. No. Pa. 241
Sheet 2

Alexander Hamilton Bowman (1803-1865) graduated from West Point Military Academy on July 1, 1825, third in a class of thirty-seven. He was detailed to serve at the Military Academy as Assistant Professor of Geography, History, and Ethics, 1825 to June 15, 1826, during which period Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee were Cadets. He also was Assistant Engineer on improvement of harbors and rivers along the Gulf of Mexico; Superintending Officer in Construction of Fort Sumter until 1851; Instructor of practical Engineering, and was promoted to Major in the Corps of Engineers on July 5, 1857.

Major Bowman was appointed Superintendent of West Point Military Academy early in the year 1861, with the rank of Colonel, which he held until July 8, 1864, and from that date until the time of his death, he served his country as a member of several Commissions appointed for the purpose of improvement of National Defences.

Samuel Bowman Jr., the fifth child, born in Wilkes-Barre May 21, 1800, was admitted to the Bar of Luzerne County on August 1821, and shortly afterward began the study of Theology. He was Rector of churches at Easton, Pennsylvania, and Lancaster in the same state, and was elected Assistant Bishop of the Diocese in May 1858, serving until his death, August 3, 1861.

A son, Charles Stewart Bowman, (1837-1868) graduated from West Point in July 1860, served as Brevet Second Lieutenant of Cavalry on frontier duty, 1860 and 1861; also saw service throughout the Civil War, rising to the rank of Brevet Major in command of Camp Verde, Texas, where he died January 13, 1868.

In the parlors of the old house, Major General Elwell S. Otis, Military Governor of the Phillipine Islands, was married to one of the daughters of Captain Samuel Bowman.

Colonel Charles Bowman Dougherty, Commander of the regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers from Wilkes-Barre and vicinity in the war with Spain, came to occupy the home in 1892, and to the garnared military history of Bowman's Hill, he brought the Headquarters Flags of the Third Brigade and the Division of the National Guard of Pennsylvania.

Author *Clifford H. Jacoby*
Approved *Thomas H. Atterton*.....
Date .. *April 3rd 1940*.....

Am